



T H E
B U S Y B O D Y.

N U M B E R I V.

To be continued every TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY.

[Price T W O - P E N C E .]

Aspera multa

Pertulit adversis rerum immersabilis undis.

T U E S D A Y, October the 16th, 1759.



RECEIVED from nature a genius so active and enterprizing, that a single kingdom appeared a sphere too narrow for the exertion of abilities, which heaven certainly endowed me with, for the emolument of my fellow-creatures. When I had attained to the age of three and twenty, I felt the same anxiety at having never contributed to promote the happiness, or regulate the affairs of our neighbours on the continent, that Cæsar experienced when upon beholding the statue of Alexander in his 30th year, he with tears lamented that he had done nothing at a time of life when the Macedonian hero had subdued the world. My inquisitive temper had soon the same effect upon me, that the trophies of Miltiades had upon young Cimon: My desire of seeing foreign courts was become so violent that I could not sleep, or if sometimes exhausted with watching and musing upon the affairs of the courts of Germany, Italy, France, and the Sublime Port, I was overpowered by fatigue, and sunk into a short slumber; it was only to dream myself in the company of the Grand Vizir, or
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the Lamas of Tartary; suggesting schemes to their Highmightinesses for the advancement of trade and commerce; proposing plans to his most Christian Majesty, calculated to fill his coffers and impoverish his people, or going *incognito* to all public places, in order to collect intelligence for the Society of Jesus, or the Holy Office. This my ardent passion for travelling, as it sprung from a laudable desire to promote the general happiness of Europe, will certainly meet with the approbation of the generous and noble-minded, who will undoubtedly agree with me in thinking, that every man of spirit should look upon it as his duty,

Non sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

SUCH were the motives that induced me to go abroad: I embarked at Dover, and had a very favourable passage to Calais, where the people in general seemed to be of as busy a character as myself. No sooner did I set foot on shore, but numbers flocked about me with offers of service; one was for carrying my cloak-bag; I had a case of pistols, which two porters undertook to carry; neither would attempt to take more than one, having before been charged with other burthens; I had likewise a few books, which were no sooner discovered by these officious agents for strangers, but a crowd of them ran to me, and every volume found a particular carrier. Nothing remarkable happened from my quitting Calais, till my arrival at Paris, the inhabitants of which city appeared to me to have a strong tincture of my restless and active disposition. No trading city surpasses in business and bustle this renowned capital of the polite world: Here coachmen drive their horses in full gallop as if at a race; and all the passengers in the streets walk so fast, and seem in such a hurry, that Homer's gods can hardly surpass them for speed.

IN this metropolis I soon signalized myself, and acquired such a degree of importance, that the government honoured me with its notice upon more than one occasion. The first accident that befell me may appear inconsiderable, but as it proceeded from my predominant passion, which could never let me be indifferent in any transaction, I must not omit it. I happened to be at the representation of a new play, which was so ill wrote, that after the first act the spectators turned their backs to the stage, and gave no farther attention to the piece:

piece : This negative way of expressing disapprobation did not suit my temper, and could not but appear extraordinary to me, as I had been used to the decisive procedure of the English theatre, where the audience is by prescription possessed of a privilege of testifying their dislike by hisses and cat-calls, and sometimes give noble proofs of English liberty, by pelting the players with oranges, and tearing up the benches of the pit. I have often shone myself upon these occasions, and may say without vanity, that there has seldom been a new play damned, or a new player hissed off the stage, but I have zealously contributed my assistance. The gentlemen of the inns of court will do me the justice to own, that in many parties which they have made against authors and actors, I have always exerted myself with a warmth which greatly promoted their enterprize. But to return to my narrative.

I COULD not continue an idle spectator of a play, which a man of taste should take a pleasure in damning ; and accordingly by hisses and groans testified my opinion of the piece. Hereupon a centinel came up to me, and desired me to follow him ; this gave me no little surprize ; I however thought proper to obey, and was conducted without delay to Fort L'Evecque, a prison in which are confined state-criminals not considerable enough to be sent to the Bastile, and persons accused of riots, and such misdemeanours. An apartment in this mansion, which I visited against my will, stood me in twenty livres a week. I soon made acquaintance with several of my fellow prisoners, most of whom were officers, or idle and extravagant young fellows. Each of them told me in confidence that he was confined for an affair of honour. *Mons. je suis ici pour une affaire d'honneur, mais comme je n'ai pas tué mon homme je conte de sortir incessamment.* Finding that they all ascribed their confinement to duels, I began to suspect the veracity of their reports, and therefore in a private conversation with each concerning the case of his neighbour, found means to obtain the intelligence I wanted. The information I received was something curious, and afforded considerable food to my inquisitive and prying temper. I was told that a young man of striking features whom, by his figure and address, I should have taken for a young nobleman, was what the French call Chevalier de l'Industrie, that is to say, a sharper who lives by the practice of every species of fraud. His character, added my intelligencer, receives an additional dignity from his being of a respectable order, which we call in this country

country *l'Ordre de la Manchette*, the Order of the Ruffle. The name of so extraordinary an order, which I had never heard before, excited my curiosity : I had often heard of the Golden Fleece, the Thistle, the Garter, &c. but the Order of the Ruffle had never before come to my knowledge. I desired an explanation, which was immediately given, by which I found that what has been often ascribed to the Society of Free Masons, is the distinguishing badge of this Order, which is very generally established in France, Italy, and Spain ; and many of the members of which are persons of distinguished rank and condition. But to proceed with the story of the above-mentioned Chevalier. He had for a long time been successful in stealing gold watches and snuff-boxes at the opera-house and the theatres ; however, this commerce had at last brought him into a scrape, having with great dexterity appropriated to himself a gold watch, and sold it to a watch-maker. The watch was advertised, and the person to whom it belonged laid claim to it ; and having come to the knowledge of him, whose nimble fingers seized the golden prey, took out a *lettre de cachet*, by virtue of which he caused the Chevalier to be sent hither for the fraud. Had he prosecuted him as for theft, his mildest fate would have been, to be sent to the galleys for life. I soon after found means to question the Chevalier concerning the case of the person who had given me this intelligence, who told me, that the person in question had stolen twenty louis-d'ors out of a gentleman's escrutoire ; and that the gentleman not willing to be instrumental in depriving a person of life, thought proper to represent the theft as a fraud only.

I ENQUIRED in like manner concerning another, and was informed that he was imprisoned for a duel, but that it was generally reported that after killing his man he had taken his watch and money. Urged by the same motive of curiosity, I asked what might have occasioned the imprisonment of a young gentleman, whose deportment was extremely easy and graceful, and his behaviour such as seemed to denote him a person of the first rank ; I was given to understand that he was a dancer at the opera, and that he had been imprisoned for having had the insolence to challenge the manager. After having remained above six weeks in this confinement, I was released, and upon quitting Fort L'Evecque, formed a resolution to intermeddle no more with theatrical affairs. Having both from nature and education a strong propensity to politics, I frequented

quented all the chief coffee-houses in Paris, where affairs of state are sometimes discussed pretty freely, though the vigilance of certain persons, called *exempts*, lays a considerable constraint upon political harangues. Happening one day to declare my sentiments pretty freely with regard to English liberty, and to rail at despotick power with a zeal which will undoubtedly meet with the approbation of every patriot, an *exempt* came up, and desired me *de par le roy*, to follow him. This summons was delivered in so polite a manner, that I could not avoid obeying it, and was immediately conducted to a hackney coach, which drove me to that celebrated mansion the Bastile, of which the ingenious *Monf. de Voltaire*, who had the honour of residing in it for some time himself, justly observes,

Il enferme souvent le crime et l'innocence.

As soon as the coach stopped I was led blind-fold through several windings and turnings, till I arrived at the cell allotted me as an apartment. Here I was debarred pen, ink, paper, and books, and left to meditate at leisure upon projects, and adjust the scales of Europe's fate. My meals were brought me by a keeper, whose behaviour made me for some time think myself in a seraglio. He was a compleat mute, I could never get from him an answer to any of the numerous questions I proposed. Thus I lived in a perfect solitude except on Sundays, when I was allowed to go to mass; this was a considerable relief to me: In the chapel I saw many persons of note and condition whom I recollected: As I have in all my travels taken particular care to get a *Nomen-clator*, to bring me to the knowledge of all persons of distinguished station or abilities. I here saw amongst others the duke de ----, who had been just before disgraced, and sent to this abode. What may perhaps seem remarkable is, that his majesty had invited him to supper on the day in which he caused him to be imprisoned. I saw likewise the celebrated *Abbé Freron*, author of the *Journal Etranger*, but he was released in about a week. This gentleman in his periodical papers, takes such liberties with eminent persons, that he is frequently honoured with an apartment in this venerable mansion. I saw moreover the famous *Chevalier D'Arc*, author of *Mes Loixirs*, and other miscellaneous pieces, who was imprisoned for having wrote
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certain verses, which gave offence to Madame de Pompadour. The Abbé *de Payeu*, whom I had formerly some acquaintance with, was one of the illustrious prisoners. His crime was the having wrote a Treatise to prove the Mortality of the Soul. However, this circumstance greatly contributed to the sale of the work; nothing is better calculated to give a book importance, or excite the curiosity of the publick, than the authors residing for some time in the Bastile. It is a sort of degree, or mark of distinction, which gives an author an undisputed claim to literary merit. This prison, like the Ostracism at Athens, enobles those who are confined in it, and particularly contributes to exalt the reputation of authors. As I have undertaken to instruct and amuse the publick by my periodical papers, I beg it as a favour of them to consider, that I have had the honour of making a residence of some months in the Bastile. This should put my abilities as a writer out of all manner of doubt, since the most eminent authors in France owe a considerable share of their reputation to this circumstance.

N. B. My travels and history shall be concluded in some future Paper.

4*4 Wanted, to read and apply the characters of the Busy Body, a person of consummate assurance, possessed of a prodigious rapidity of expression, without any solid sense.----As several pretenders have been already rejected, it is hoped no person will apply, who is not well versed in the art of scandal.

* * In order to oblige such of my relations, as choose to promote my work, Mr. POTTINGER, my publisher, at the *Dunciad* in Pater-noster-Row, has, in allusion to his own sign, and to the fable of Apuleius, placed a *Golden Ass* in his shop, to receive their offerings; and I doubt not but their contributions will make his *Ass* as famous for its wit, as *Button's Lion* was for its eloquence.